# Religious references in contemporary Irish-English

# Religious references in contemporary Irish English: 'for the love of God almighty…. I'm a holy terror for turf'

FIONA FARR

BRÓNA MURPHY

*Abstract*

*This article examines the nature and use of religious references across a range of contexts, and also age and gender groups to establish their patterning and functioning in contemporary English, with particular reference to Irish English. The examination is carried out by using quantitative and qualitative corpus-based tools and methodologies, such as relative frequency lists and concordances, as well as details of formulaic strings, including significant clusters. The paper highlights that religious references are high frequency items in informal spoken discourse and that they are predominantly used in non-religious contexts. In terms of age, their use seems to be characteristic of the discourse of the older speakers, while a gender-based analysis underlines their elevated use by male speakers. The analyses conclude that religious references are so commonplace in Irish English that their use, as a means of emotional expression, now seems almost ubiquitously acceptable among the represented groups, and when used, these items do not seem to cause offence.*

## 1. Introduction

A primary concern of pragmatics must surely be the use of words and phrases which, in various circumstances, have the potential to cause offence to some or all who encounter them. The issue of taboo language has been with us in the English speaking world since the tradition of censorship resulting from the troubles of the Reformation during the reign of Henry VIII. Indeed, one of the earliest cases of outlawing language came in the banning of the use of the Lord's name in vain around that time. This ban reflected biblical sanctions, though was without the severe retributions found in the Bible: "And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death" (Leviticus 24: 16, cited in Allan and Burridge 2006: 15). Stemming from the chastisement of words of religious orientation in inappropriate contexts, the realm of offensive language and censorship has grown to include many other spheres of reference which have evolved and coloured language use over the centuries. In fact, in some cultures and genres, we have seen almost a full rotation to a situation where the frequent use of this kind of language has implicitly redefined it so that it is now no longer considered taboo. This is especially true of the use of religious references in informal spoken language, and among certain age and gender groups. Culture may also have a part to play. Indeed, anecdotal evidence suggests that Irish English speakers employ taboo language items with more frequency and less intended insult than might be the case in other varieties of English. Both of these hypotheses will be tested in this study by examining religious references across a number of varieties of English, with a primary focus on Irish English, while also taking account of pragmatic variables such as context, age and gender. Following a background discussion of taboo language as represented in previous research, this paper will present an empirical investigation using corpus collections of written and spoken language from a number of contexts to ascertain the nature and use of religious references in contemporary English. The aim of the paper is to explore the nature and use of religious references across a

range of contexts, age and gender groups to establish their patterning and functioning in contemporary English, with particular reference to Irish English.

## 2. Taboo language

Surprisingly little has been said about taboo language in recent linguistic literature, despite its frequency in spoken language (McEnery et al. 2000). Jay (1999: 9-10) highlights that despite the fact that cursing is an essential element of language, it has, to date, been largely ignored and neglected in linguistics and psycholinguistics with, of course, a few exceptions in recent years. Jay's Neuro-Pyscho-Social (NPS) theory of speech redefines language to include cursing because language, he argues, should represent speakers' knowledge of pragmatics, politeness, figurative language, vulgarity, insults, sex talk, humour, verbal abuse and anger. He adds that such words are normal because they obey semantic and syntactic rules, and unique because they provide an emotional intensity to speech that non-curse words cannot achieve.

Taboo language has been labelled bad language by language purism which has sought to constrain individuals' linguistic behaviour. Cameron (1995) adds that language purism is, in fact, more complex as speakers own a sense of linguistic values that makes verbal hygiene a part of every speaker's linguistic competence. Speakers are very aware of traditions of etiquette and are, therefore, defined by culturally sensitive social parameters, such as age, sex, education and social status, according to Allan and Burridge (2006: 237). Speakers are conscious of not losing face by offending the sensibilities of their audience and, thus, adhere to euphemism which is the polite expected level of behaviour in certain contexts. However, they also add that "nothing is taboo for all people, under all circumstances, for all time" and state that there is an endless list of behaviours that have been tabooed but yet are practised at times by people for whom they are presumably not taboo. We find also from studies by

Bailey and Timm (1976), Selnow (1985) and Hughes (1992), as well as others, that taboo language is not always used to insult or cause offence, but that dysphemism can be used in a more phatic way with forms functioning as communicative devices that facilitate bonding, for example (cf. Selnow 1985).

Methodological approaches to the examination of taboo language have undergone a recent shift, and while questionnaires gather information on people's perception of their linguistic patterns and have been used in data collection (Bailey and Timm 1976; Hughes 1992), corpus-based approaches focusing on linguistic forms in more naturally occurring settings are now prevalent (Stenström 1991; 2006; McEnery and Xiao 2004). Such a trend is popular and fitting at a time when more spoken corpora are becoming available, with some even being made accessible on the Internet accompanied by sound and refined search tools (Stenström 2006). Secondly, besides the general beliefs from the culture at large affecting the likelihood of a speaker cursing, the immediate communicative context also has a strong influence on a speaker's behaviour (Jay 1999: 147).

### 2.1. *Searching for a definition*

Despite the scarcity of research on taboo language, one element that appears to link all the studies that have been carried out, is the flexibility of the different terms used generally to refer to a set of taboo words. Stenström (1991), for example, uses the term 'expletive' to refer to a broad range of words, such as *Jesus*, *bloody*, *bastard* and *shit*, while Andersson and Trudgill (1990) refer to many of the same words as 'swearwords'. Other researchers, such as de Klerk (1991) and Hughes (1992), fail to distinguish between expletives and swearwords even though de Klerk (1991: 157) does concede that expletives are typically words that are concerned with sex and excretion. However, although she makes an attempt at narrowing the meaning of the word, she opens it up almost immediately to include a wide range of other

taboo items by adding that the definition can indeed include anything that has a sacred place in the belief systems of a community. In the present paper, the term 'taboo language' broadly refers to a set of words and expressions that are totally or partly prohibited in society (cf. Leach 1966, cited in Andersson and Trudgill 1990: 15). The famous anthropologist Edmund Leach (1966, cited in Andersson and Trudgill 1990: 15) highlighted the use of religious references as a taboo form in the 1960s alongside other forms, such as dirty words concerned with sex and excretion (e.g. *bugger, shit*) and words used in what he referred to as 'animal abuse' (e.g. *cow, bitch*). He highlights that religious references are words that are concerned with the Christian religion, including, e.g., *Christ, Jesus* and *God*. For the purposes of this paper, we focus on this particular category of taboo language in an Irish English context and examine how religious forms behave in terms of context, age and gender.

### 2.2. *Religious taboo items: Age, gender and genre*

Religion is the source of some of our most frequent and common curse words. Jay (1999: 190) mentions that centuries of prohibitions against and declarations about the use of religious words have empowered them with significant, but now diminishing, emotional meaning. The use of taboo religious references has been subject to some research since the 1970s and findings relating to age, gender and genre have been published. With regard to age-related variation, Bailey and Timm's (1976) study showed that the oldest cohort of users (47-61 year olds) avoided the use of stronger expletives and instead tended to use variations of *God*, for example, *Oh (my) God*. In terms of gender, Stenström (1991) categorised the religious words *God, Gosh, Goodness, Lord, Christ, Crikey, Jesus* and *Oh my God* together in a grouping referred to as 'heaven.' She added that most of the female taboo words came from this category while the male speakers used words like *bastard, damn* and *devil*.

Looking at the context of use, casual conversation has generally been the genre under scrutiny, but recent work by Sapolsky and Kaye (2005) examined offensive language in prime time television as they argue that televised content is expected to reflect social cultures and norms (cf. McQuail 1992). They established that language in these contexts has become coarser as it more closely reflects real-life conversation. In keeping with this, Farhi (2002), a television industry spokesman, explains that everyone uses these forms and therefore they should not be regarded as taboo on television. In any case, informal spoken language does tend to present illustrative examples in ample abundance to justify it as an appropriate test-bed, as will be seen in the following analysis.

## 3. The analysis

In this section, we examine the use of religious references in a number of different contexts in a variety of cultural milieu in order to establish the pragmatic influences that may be in operation. The results of some quantitative and qualitative corpus-based investigations, taking a number of variables into account, are presented and discussed. The section starts by comparing spoken and written language, then with a focus on spoken language only, looks at religious references in relatively large amounts of American, British and Irish English data. Following this, a more microscopic view of the Irish data is taken, and detailed contextual analysis is conducted to establish significant pragmatic functioning. Specific factors related to context of use, age and gender are presented in the final three parts of the analysis. All data are drawn from specific corpus collections, some details of which are provided at relevant junctures as the analysis unfolds. Further information, including references to relevant websites, are given after the bibliographical references at the end of this article. The linguistic items under scrutiny were isolated as a result of random manual examinations of the data, as well as informed hypotheses formations on the part of the authors based on previously

published research and also on personally observed language use in a range of environments. In many of the following sections, we differentiate between original religious meanings and uses and non-religious meanings and uses. The degree of offence taken and the level of taboo associated with the later contexts can only ever be of a personal and individual nature and therefore we have chosen not to use categorisations such as offensive or taboo in the presentation of the results, but instead opt to look at intended meanings and uses. In fact, it is very likely that many users in contemporary Irish society do not attach the same level of taboo as in the past to employing these references in a variety of contexts.

### 3.1. *Written and spoken language*

An obvious point of departure, particularly when examining linguistic items with the potential to function as taboo, is to observe differences that may be present between written and spoken language modes. Traditionally, swearing has been associated more with spoken language rather than with written, depending on context, of course. To isolate spoken language as the variable, data from one variety of English, in this case British English, are analysed in Table 1. Samples of approximately one million words of spoken and one million words of written language from the respective components of the British National Corpus (BNC) were used for this part of the analysis. They were accessed on-line through Lextutor (accessed January 2008). The results are differentiated for each mode based on whether the items are functioning with their original religious meaning or whether they are being used in contexts devoid of their original meanings and in ways which may be, or may have been, considered offensive or blasphemous to individuals of particular religious persuasions.

**[[INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]]**

The results in this table come from individual concordance searches for each of the items. Honorific uses, such as *My Lord* in legal settings, or *Lord* as a surname, have been excluded from the counts and analysis. Also of note is the fact that, although they present themselves in the written data, many uses are in the context of direct quotation from literature and fiction writing, and so artificially inflate the written results to an extent. Nonetheless, the point is well illustrated here and by looking at the total results we can see that there are approximately 100 more occurrences overall of these items in the spoken components (748) than in the written components (641) of the BNC samples. The real significance lies in the differentiated uses where inverse relationships manifest themselves in the numbers. The spoken language boasts 481 non-original uses to its 267 original uses, while the written shows an opposite trend with 523 uses representing religious meanings and just 118 not. This is an imbalance of almost four to one in the written data, showing the persisting conservative nature of the printed data represented in this sample of the BNC. This simple analysis supports the hypothesis that spoken language is indeed the most fertile ground for further exploring the nature and use of these items from a pragmatic perspective and indeed the remainder of the investigations in this paper concentrate exclusively on oral language use.

### 3.2. *Spoken language: Contexts and varieties*

Thanks to much past and present corpus-based research, we now know that the context in which language is used is fundamental to determining its content (Biber et al. 1999; Carter and McCarthy 2006). Whether we speak of registers, genres, varieties, or dialects, contextual factors, including the very strong pragmatic influences in spoken interactions, play a major role especially when it comes to the inclusion of potentially offensive language use, or as it may be considered by others, markers of exclusive in-group or sub-culture identity, such as is often found among teenagers (discussed by Stenström 1991, 2006). Based on such established

knowledge, this section examines three different varieties of English (American, British and Irish), each representing different spoken genres: professional/political, academic and casual conversation. More broadly, the genres represent different ends on the continuum of formality in spoken language, with the casual conversation of LCIE (Limerick Corpus of Irish English) and COLT (Corpus of London Teenage English), providing a contrast to the more formal institutionalised settings for the academic language in MICASE (Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English) and LIBEL CASE (Limerick Belfast Corpus of Academic Spoken English), and the political language represented in CSPAE (Corpus of Spoken Professional American English). These corpora vary in size from half a million words to two million words, and so results are normalised to words per million in Table 2 for comparative purposes (in all tables in this paper results are presented in words per million unless otherwise stated).

**[[INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]]**

Table 2 presents the undifferentiated use of religious references in the five spoken corpora examined, the task of trawling through approximately three and a half thousand examples, proving not only too onerous but often too ambiguous a task to do with any degree of confidence. Nonetheless, the data once again support the fact that the use of such items lies primarily in the realm of informal spoken language use. Within this context we see that the LCIE includes the more significant number of uses. The teenage language in COLT contains just 200 fewer examples. It might have been expected to find more items related to potentially offensive uses in the teenage language but as we will see later in the analysis, the older speakers in LCIE make frequent use of these items in both original and taboo senses, and perhaps the teenagers have a preference for the more explicit and universally offensive items related to realms of sex, animals, etc., as discussed earlier. The three relatively more formal genres show much lower occurrences, in keeping with the pragmatic constraints of the situations in question. Political language, not wanting to offend, manifests the lowest

frequency and this is in keeping with the highly religiously conservative nature of American society. The academic discourse shows some trends of use, but it is very likely that many of these are in their original uses in contexts of lectures and academic discussions related to matters of theology, ethics, religious persuasions and such. In any case, academic language is known to be less censored and so these results are not surprising. Interestingly, the Irish academic data come behind the American, but this is probably due to the nature of the disciplines represented in the data. The table shows that the words *Jesus* and *Christ* are relatively elevated in use in LCIE, the significance of which will be examined in more detail in the following section.

### 3.3. *Religious references in informal Irish English spoken discourse*

**[[INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE]]**

Looking at differentiated uses in the LCIE corpus of mainly casual conversation provides a fascinating, though somewhat predictable insight into the way in which these words are used in contemporary spoken language of an informal nature. Original religious references account for only 146 of the 1528 overall frequency of occurrence, giving a ratio of approximately 1 to 9. The words are used in a range of other contexts and tend to be multi-functional and to cluster in their usage with each other, and indeed with some of what have been considered the stronger taboo words. *God*, *Jesus* and *Christ* are by far the most frequent items on the list in Table 3, and so a more detailed examination of each is fitting at this point in the discussion to determine significant patterns of use.

3.3.1. *'God' in Irish English*

Running a concordance list of *God* in LCIE reveals some very strong collocational patterns and fixed phrases. The most significant (more than 5 occurrences) of these two and three word clusters to the left and to the right of *God* are listed in Table 4.

**[[INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE]]**

Based on these results, some patterns of usage can be identified as well as some fixed phrases incorporating the word *God*. Such phrases include: *oh my God, swear to God, honest to God, God help us/you* etc., *thank God for, God I hope/know, my God imagine.* An interesting observation here is that there are traces of the original meanings to be found in such expressions, for example, notions of honesty, help, hope, gratitude, all of which were originally tied up with religion, and for some individuals still are. However, in the majority of the contexts represented in the LCIE data, usage has become much looser than that, and the fact that on seventeen occasions the word *God* is followed by laughter from one of the interactants further hints at this distance, and its use around episodes of emotional display, nervousness, or perhaps embarrassment. Example 1 illustrates its use in context in an exchange between two elderly male friends living in rural Ireland.

(1) John: *Yeah, ah this turf, you'd be surprised you wouldn't want so much of it.*

Paddy: *Aru blast it John+*

John: *For the love of* ***God almighty***, ***God***.

Paddy: *+when you're burning it.*

John: *I'd have it burnt in a week.*

Paddy: *You would?*

John: *I would. I'm a holy terror for turf.*

Paddy: ***God*** *I am too I am+*

John: *Shure we have the heating and the coal.*

Paddy: *Shure I have too.*

John: *Yeah an I'd die only for it. An I turn off the heating for to put on the fire. I love the open fire. I love the fire there's nothing like it.*

Paddy: *No.*

John: *'Tis very comfortable.*

Paddy: *'Tis. Well a bad drafter is the worst thing you ever had in a house.* ***Oh God*** *almighty, I love the open fire.*

This example illustrates the fact that although original uses are not as pervasive, the word *God* is still employed in very culturally rich exchanges, peppering them with nuance and meaning. We see it being used four times in this short exchange and the co-occurrence of *almighty* and *holy* in the same exchange further reinforce its strength. The topic of house heating is culturally illustrative in the infamous damp Irish climate, and the importance of interpersonal relationship building can be seen and is traceable throughout the exchange by the use of convergence tokens, repetition and listenership tokens. We can also see a good example of the Irish *for to* infinitive structure followed by the commonly used multi-word verb group structure with the object coming after the adverbial particle, which is not typical of all varieties of English. Therefore, although its range of meanings and uses have become more casual, it is still a very strong indicator of pragmatically appropriate communication in an Irish context. Later in this paper, its use will be contrasted among speakers of different age and gender groups.

### 3.3.2. *'Jesus' and 'Christ' in Irish English*

Occurring over 400 times in the Irish data, *Jesus* is the second significant reference from the list of items under examination. The word *Christ* occurs in its vicinity with statistical

significance, and will, therefore, be investigated together with it in this section. Again Table 5 includes all co-occurrences which are found more than 5 times in the data.

**[[INSERT TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE]]**

Some of the same patterns emerge in the use of *Jesus* as were illustrated above for *God*. However, there is a notable absence of the more original phrases which have become fixed, for example, *God help us* etc. Three two word phrases show significance in Table 5: *Ah Jesus*, *Oh Jesus* and *Jesus Christ*. These are all used for expressions of emotion: surprise, anger, shock, disapproval, happiness, and again there are quite a few instances of laughter occurring before and after their use. Also different here is the range of phonetic realisations which are found, transcribed variably as: *Jaysus*, *Jayz* and *Jeez*. The concordance of *Jesus Christ* shows some of its contexts of use in Figure 1.

**[[INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]]**

On five occasions *Jesus Christ* is used in the vicinity of stronger taboo language items (lines 2, 3, 5, 11 and 19), which may signal its elevated strength relative to the word *God*. The concordance lines also show its use around episodes of excitement, such as watching or talking about a football match (lines 4 and 19), quantities of money and other items of notable size (lines 8, 10, 11 and 12), and generally intensifying an account of personal experiences or the state of the world (lines 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 13, 16, 17, 18 and 20).

### 3.4. *Age-related variation in the use of religious references*

Having examined general casual conversation where the participants are adults of various ages, and establishing some general patterns of use, our next point of departure is to investigate if age has a determining role to play in the use of religious references. To do this, a female adult corpus (FAC) comprised of three mini-corpora of 15,000 words each of female only talk are used, each representing a different age group (20 year olds, 40 year olds and

70/80 year olds) (cf. Murphy 2007 for full details). The first indication of religious references in the corpus came from an examination of the keyword list that was carried out on the FAC. The keyword analysis (conducted using Wordsmith Tools 4, Scott 2004) which compares the words in the text with a reference set of words taken from a larger corpus of text or reference corpus reveals more specific distinctions. Any words found to be relatively outstanding in frequency are considered key and are presented in order of significant statistical difference. This type of analysis very precisely establishes shared and defining characteristics of a particular text, in this case the FAC. If we look at Table 6, we find that among items, such as amplifiers (*really, so*), discourse markers (*like, actually, so*), hedges (*actually, just, suppose, wouldn't*), boosters (*obviously*), expletives (*fuck, fucking*) and contracted forms (*won't, I'll*) which are characteristic of the spoken genre of casual conversation, we also find six religious references (*God, Jesus, God's, Lord, prayers, saint*).

[[INSERT TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE]]

Having established the presence of religious references as key items in female adult talk, a full investigation of age-related variation provides some interesting insights. Searches for each of the items examined in previous sections yield the results in Table 7 in frequencies of words per million.

**[[INSERT TABLE 7 ABOUT HERE]]**

It is interesting to notice here that it is the oldest age cohort, 70s/80s, that has the highest frequency of religious references while the 20s adults have the lowest. The 40s group falls between the 20s and the 70s/80s. This table also indicates, in line with the LCIE analysis earlier, that the most common religious reference in all three groups is *God*. It also shows a noticeable level of variation in the use of *Jesus* with relatively high occurrences in the 20s and 40s in comparison with low frequencies of use in the 70s/80s group. There are no occurrences of *sacred*. This initial analysis gives insight into the distribution of low frequency religious

forms, such as *almighty, Christ, damn, devil, hell, holy*, *Lord* and *sacred*, most of which are characteristic of the older cohorts. Even more insightful is a differentiated presentation of the results of how these items are used in original and non-religious contexts. Table 8 presents a functionally differentiated account.

**[[INSERT TABLE 8 ABOUT HERE]]**

Table 8 indicates that while the 20s and 40s use of the religious references is mainly in non-religious contexts, the 70s/80s group's use is shared with its original meaning. The items that they use most often in their genuine form are *God* and *holy*. There is also evidence to show that the 40s also sometimes use *God* in its genuine meaning but it is much less frequent than in the older cohort. The table also indicates that the 20s females do not use any of the religious items in their original meaning. As highlighted earlier in Table 8, *God* is, indeed, the most common religious reference among the females. However, the second most common item in the 20s and 40s talk is the use of *Jesus*. This is in contrast to what we find in the 70s/80s data where there is a very low occurrence of *Jesus*. In the 20s and 40s, we also find a high frequency of the use of *Christ* as a taboo word. There are no references to *Christ* in the older cohort. In examining the non-religious uses in this 70s/80s group, we find that they tend to veer towards using weaker taboo forms such as *Damn*, *Lord*, *Almighty* which is indicative of the linguistic purity that Jespersen (1922), Lakoff (1975) and Bailey and Timm (1976) talked about, while the stronger forms such as *Christ* and *Jesus* are favoured by the youngest group, the 20s, and also the 40s group.

### 3.5. *Gender-related variation in the use of religious references*

Focusing on the influence of gender on the frequency and distribution of these religious references, a comparative analysis with a parallel male adult corpus (MAC) will be made in this section. Looking at Table 9, we see that religious references occur more frequently in the

MAC than in the FAC, and there is some variation with regard to the preference of forms. We see that the use of *Christ* is most common in second place in the male corpus while *Jesus* is in second place in the female corpus. *Jesus* occurs in third position in the MAC. The FAC shows that the females use *Lord* and *God* more often than the MAC, while *Christ*, *Jesus*, *almighty*, *hell* are used significantly more often than in the FAC. The males and females share frequency with regards to weaker taboo religious forms such as *damn* and *holy*.

**[[INSERT TABLE 9 ABOUT HERE]]**

It is interesting to note here that the religious references found in this context are quite different from the references found by Stenström (1991) in her examination of the adult educated native speakers of British English in the London Lund Corpus. Her data, which consisted mainly of thirty-four face-to-face conversations and five telephone conversations found *heaven*, *Gosh*, *Goodness*, *hell*, *God dammit* to be among the most common religious references, that is, they all occurred at least three times. Interestingly, none of these references, except one, *hell*, occurs in FAC and MAC. However, common to both the study of British English and Irish English are *God*, *Lord*, *Christ* and *Jesus*, although they seem to differ in terms of frequency. This is most likely due to the fact that variation in what is taboo or significant in different cultures, according to Andersson and Trudgill (1990: 57), can show up in different ways. They mention that we expect swearing to be related to the areas that are taboo or significant in a particular culture. As religion has been a highly esteemed and respected part of Irish culture and society to date, it is not surprising that these religious references occur so frequently.

### 3.6. *Age and gender-related variation in the use of religious references*

Bringing together these quantitative findings allows us to make certain observations on taboo religious references in relation to both age and gender as related variables. Table 10 presents the comparative results.

**[[INSERT TABLE 10 ABOUT HERE]]**

A number of observations can be made on reflection of the results in Table 10. Age clearly plays a role in the frequency and distribution of taboo religious forms used, with the older males employing these items most frequently and the women in their 40s also showing a comparatively high preference of use. The distribution according to age is more diverse and in direct relation to progressing age in the male group, whereas it is more evenly distributed across the female age groups. Gender also influences the frequency of religious references used in a potentially offensive way, with men showing a stronger tendency in this respect. We see that men tend to be less conservative in their use of taboo forms than women, men choosing the potentially stronger items and using them more frequently. There would seem to be much variation across the MAC and the FAC in terms of the frequency order of certain items, with *Christ* and *Jesus* appearing to be markers of masculine discourse and *God* a marker of female discourse in these contexts. Combining age and gender observations, we find that in relation to the oldest age cohort in the FAC, the women tend to choose less offensive forms than their younger female counterparts.

Having identified quantitative variation in the use of taboo religious forms which would seem to be linked to issues of age and gender, let us look in more detail at three of the most common taboo religious references used in these mini corpora, that is, the use of *God, Jesus* and *Christ*. These were also the most frequently identified items used in the larger LCIE corpus analysed earlier in this paper.

### 3.6.1. *'God': An age perspective in female talk*

In the female talk, we find a high occurrence of the use of *God* particularly in two, three and four word clusters as illustrated in Table 11. Interestingly, we find a high occurrence of *Oh (my) God* in the 20s group. This feature reflects a linguistic trend made popular by the American sitcom 'Friends' which began in 1994 (Tagliamonte and Roberts 2005). There are a number of occurrences of *God* in the 40s, but here it is not as common as in the 20s. This finding corroborates Staley's (1979) study which indicated that *Oh my God* was used most often by females ranging in age from 18-47. Looking at the oldest age cohort, we find that the women use a much broader range of expressions including *God* than do the other groups, especially in comparison with the 20s females. The 70s/80s also seem to be more creative in their usage of the references as can be seen in Table 11, with expressions such as *Praise be to God, I declare to God, Oh loving God, Mother of God.*

**[[INSERT TABLE 11 ABOUT HERE]]**

If we examine these references more closely in context, we find that the females' main use of *God* is to evoke surprise, anger/annoyance as well as pity, emphasis and excitement. We can see these functions in the following examples taken from the 70s/80s females:

– Surprise

(2) Nora: Mrs Newman was in Dublin that's why you didn't see her.

Ellen: ***For God's sake****, was she?*

This function is immediately obvious when looking at the transcribed data, knowing the wider context and listening to the intonation.

– Anger/annoyance

This example shows two friends discussing a neighbour who was annoyed about a new law.

(3) Ellen: ***Lord God*** *he was nearly jumping out of his skin that it was illegal or whatever*.

Nora: ***God***.

– Pity

This extract comes from a discussion of the war in Iraq.

(4) Ellen: *Mother of God isn't it awful.*

Nora**:** *Oh Ellen don't talk about it* ***Oh God*** *when they when they showed the photographs of the poor people who were captured*.

– Emphasis

This is a narrative extract of an event involving teenage boys fighting on the street.

(5) Ellen: *And shortly after there were these two teenage fellas flaking* [= hitting] *each other it took me heart out of me flaking each other and pulling the clothes off each other.*

Marie: ***God***.

Ellen: *And then they pushed from there I only saw the first battle they had*.

Marie: *Yeah.*

Ellen: *But* ***Glory be to God*** *I said is anyone safe*.

– Excitement

(6) Ellen: *She had a beautiful dinner and her house is gorgeous* ***Oh God*** *'tis gorgeous did you see it.*

Nora: *Her mother tells me on and off.*

Given such high frequency of this type of use of the word *God*, it seems, as illustrated by Stenström (2006: 6), that it has lost its religious meaning in casual conversation and has simply developed into an expression of surprise, shock, pity, emphasis or excitement as illustrated in the examples from the 70s/80s females. Stenström also indicates that it is probably no longer perceived as a taboo word at all. This would seem to suggest that words with religious connotations are less offensive than words related to sex and other semantic groups. This would appear to hold true in relation to the female data; as a quick search shows, there are no examples of any sex related taboo forms in the 70s/80s data while there are quite a number in the younger groups. We could, therefore, hypothesise that the 70s/80s group may be depending on variations of *God* to express what the other groups do with harsher expletives. This would, then, account for the higher frequency and increased creativity of so-called taboo references of *God* in the 70s/80s speakers in comparison to the other groups.

### 3.6.2. *'Jesus': An age perspective in female talk*

In terms of age, we find that *Jesus* is used most often by the 20s and 40s and never in its original meaning, while it is never used as a taboo word by FAC 70s/80s and only occurs once in its original meaning in this particular group. The 20s and 40s women's use highlights its pragmatic diversity. While the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (1995) states that *Jesus* is associated with surprise and anger mainly, this study has identified other pragmatic uses, often overlapping, such as:

– Exasperation/Anger

Linda, in this example, is trying to persuade her friend to take money for petrol.

(7) Linda: ***Jesus*** *for God's sake the bus wouldn't cost a tenner.*

– Surprise/disbelief

(8) Maura: *Seven grand for signing up?*

Deirdre: ***Jesus***.

– Emphasis

(9) Kate: *Garlic or something **Jesus** it was lovely.*

– Shock/amazement

(10) Mairead: *Rob won't know himself when he gets a taste of life **Jesus** Christ you wouldn't want to be doing that too often Mister Jeep.*

– Worry

(11) Kate ***Oh Jesus** he's very unstable.*

On examination of these pragmatic uses of *Jesus* across the age groups, we find that there is noticeable variation between its use in FAC 20s and FAC 40s. In FAC 20s, we find that the primary use of *Jesus* is to indicate surprise which would fit in with its dictionary definition. However in FAC 40s, the main uses are indeed in expressing surprise, but also in expressing emphasis.

**[[INSERT FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE]]**

A plausible explanation for the fact that we never find *Jesus* as a taboo form in FAC 70s/80s is that its use in this way would be regarded as blasphemous by this particular group due to their strict Christian upbringing and beliefs. However, as the findings indicate, its use is favoured by the FAC 20s and 40s quite possibly as being a stronger way of expressing surprise or disbelief or any of its other functions. As it possesses more syllables than *God*, in terms of pronunciation, it may be regarded as having more impact as one can play with the stress and intonation. This is reflected in Stenström (1991), who enlisted the assistance of nine

British colleagues to grade expressions on a scale from strong to weak. In a table which illustrates the expletive force of the expressions, *Jesus* is viewed as being stronger than *God*, a finding which was also included in Quirk et al. (1985: 852).

### 3.6.3. *'Christ': An age and gender perspective*

As indicated in Table 10, *Christ* occurs four times more often in male talk than it does in female talk making it, it would seem, a marker of masculinity. If we then look more closely at *Christ* in context in the male data, where it is relatively dominant, we find that it occurs in a number of clusters. These are listed in Table 12.

[[INSERT TABLE 12 ABOUT HERE]]

The most frequent cluster is *Jesus Christ* and it is used as a response token to indicate shock, surprise or incredulity. For instance, in the following example, the men are discussing minus temperatures in the Arctic Circle.

(12) Mike: *Minus Twenty-two degrees?*

Ed: *Minus Twenty-two degrees Fahrenheit*.

Mike: ***Jesus Christ***

And in Example 13, the men are talking about boat engines.

(13) Ed: *It was made in shit a twin engine one.*

Mike: *Yeah she'd be bigger than her now like*.

Ed: ***Jesus Christ***.

From a detailed reading of this two-word cluster in context, it appears that its high frequency in the 40s males may be connected to the types of topics the men discuss. Their topics tend to own quite a dramatic edge, ranging from discussing a boat going on the rocks, excessive exporting costs, sensationalist daily news articles to minus temperatures in the Artic Circle and thus seem to elicit a strong reaction for which the form *Jesus Christ* seems to fit well. It

carries weight and seems to package the strength and intensity of the men's reaction to a level that seems to satisfy the requirements of the interaction. Their interaction is very much based on intensity and sensationalism, as is illustrated in Example 14, in which the men discuss bad weather and nautical activity.

(14) Mike: *A fella I know from Ballygarven has two boats there John Hatton and when the weather gets bad from the South East he comes up the East Ferry somewhere where he ties the boats one of em is about eighty feet where would he tie em?*

Ed: *On the marina I suppose.*

Mike: *He says he ties it em on to the trees anyway.*

Ed: *There's trees down by the thing.*

Mike: *Tis on to trees he ties it anyway he says.*

Ed: *Fuck it.*

Mike: *When the weather is bad.*

Ed: *But that tide goes right up by Ballycotton.*

Mike: *Yeah it's only.*

Ed: *Do y'know is it tidal?*

Mike: *There?*

Ed: *Mm.*

Mike: *Lethal lethal I was often there like you know laughing about it I came in there one time now and there'd be just mm Gloria and Anthony.*

Ed: *Yeah.*

Mike: *And you'd go into the berth you know.*

Ed: *Yeah and the tide'd catch ya.*

Mike: *I tell ya now I'd be running at about five knots there four or five knots.*

Ed: ***Jesus Christ.***

In this example, the men discuss someone Mike knows who ties boats to a tree during bad weather in a particularly bad stretch of water. They discuss the lethal tidal current in a particular place and Mike recalls a story where he had to do four or five knots to get through it. This is an especially dramatic event which required skill and competence in navigating a boat in such strong waters. Ed uses *Jesus Christ* as a form which is strong enough and most suitable to communicate the intensity of his reaction to such a story. Anything other than this, *God*, for example, would possibly be too weak.

Within the use of *Christ*, we also find age-related variation in the male talk in the form of *by Christ*. It would seem that *by Christ* is a marker of the oldest male cohort and is less frequent in the 20s or 40s males. It is used before an utterance with the function of emphasising the message that follows. For example, here 70s/80s males are talking about someone they used to know once.

(15) John: *He was Pat do you ever remember going to you do of course Munster final in Killarney?*

Pat: *Yeah* ***by Christ*** *I dunno did he had he a son that played with Kerry one time one of them McMahon's?*

John: *That's what I'm coming to.*

Pat: *Gary McMahon wasn't it that was how long was that?*

John: ***By Christ*** *twas a long time ago.*

Interestingly while there is quite a high occurrence of *by Christ* in the 70s/80s group, there are no occurrences of *Jesus Christ* which would highlight that this older age group, similar to their 70s/80s female counterparts, may regard it as quite a harsh or strong phrase and one which they tend to avoid. By contrast, in the 20s males, there are no occurrences of *by Christ*.

From this more qualitative analysis, we can make a number of observations on the impact of age and gender on the use of *God*, *Jesus* and *Christ*. *God* was examined in the female data and

it was established that it is used most often and occurred in a broader range of forms in the 70s/80s groups than the other age groups. It was found that this oldest cohort does not use stronger expletives in the way in which the other groups do and therefore seem to depend on variations of *God* to express what the other groups do with harsher forms. *Jesus* was identified as a religious taboo form characteristic of the younger groups and is used to express exasperation, anger, surprise, shock and worry. It has more force and strength as a taboo form than *God* owing partly to the fact that it has more syllables and it is not used as a taboo form by the 70s/80s cohort probably due to their stricter Catholic beliefs. *Christ* was highlighted as a marker of masculine talk. It occurred most often in the 40s male data with the most frequent cluster being *Jesus Christ*. It was found that this cluster was linked to the kinds of topics the men discussed, that is, highly sensationalist stories that required a strong response. Variation in the males' use of *Christ* was also encountered, for example, the oldest cohort used *by Christ* more often than the others to add emphasis to their utterances.

## 4. Closing comments

This paper aimed to examine the nature and use of religious references across a range of contexts, age and gender groups to establish their patterning and functioning in contemporary English, with particular reference to Irish English. Having established their predominant use in spoken language of an informal nature, and their use primarily in non-religious contexts, a more detailed discussion of associated patterns and uses was embarked upon. Ten words associated originally with the Christian religion were consistently identified in a number of spoken language corpora: *almighty, Christ, damn, devil, God, hell, holy, sacred, Lord Jesus.* Detailed analyses revealed a number of interesting points in relation to the use of these forms. The forms are now used with elevated frequency in what might have been considered offensive ways in the past or in some contexts, but this use is so commonplace and

unremarkable in casual conversation that it would be unreasonable to attribute a tag of taboo language use to it in all such scenarios. In fact, in line with earlier research, it is likely that many users of the language would not now take any major insult, if any at all, at usage, such as *Oh my God*, to indicate surprise or anger. Items tend to cluster in repeated patterns of two, three and four word clusters, such as the cluster just mentioned and these occur with relatively high frequencies across genders and age groups as part of the users' fixed repertoire of phrases drawn on in moments of high drama or emotional expression. There is a male preference evident in the relatively high frequencies of the items under scrutiny, and differences are also obvious in both frequency and preferences for individual items across the three age groups examined, with some of the older groups shying away from what they may perceive as inappropriate uses of *Jesus* and *Christ* in favour of the more innocuous items, and also using them in ways that are more easily identified with their original religious semantic associations. Pragmatically, it seems that such items do not pose a threat to face in the contexts under examination. Indeed, as evidenced by their high frequencies, they are now considered an acceptable part of language use in this particular variety of English.

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**Tables and Figures**

Table 1. *Religious references in the British National Corpus.*

| | BNC Written | | | BNC Spoken | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total occs. | Religious meaning/ use | Non-relig. meaning/ use | Total occs. | Religious meaning/ use | Non-relig. meaning/ use |
| *Almighty* | 8 | 6 | 2 | 16 | 12 | 4 |
| *Christ* | 32 | 29 | 3 | 48 | 22 | 26 |
| *Damn* | 12 | 0 | 12 | 29 | 0 | 29 |
| *Devil* | 11 | 8 | 3 | 18 | 3 | 15 |
| *God* | 352 | 287 | 65 | 422 | 133 | 289 |
| *Hell* | 28 | 7 | 21 | 88 | 1 | 87 |
| *Holy* | 31 | 27 | 4 | 15 | 15 | 0 |
| *Jesus* | 47 | 43 | 4 | 77 | 58 | 19 |
| *Lord* | 93 | 90 | 3 | 31 | 20 | 11 |
| *Sacred* | 27 | 26 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| Total | 641 | 523 | 118 | 748 | 267 | 481 |

Table 2. *Religious references in spoken language: Informal and formal settings.*

| | Informal contexts | | Formal contexts | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | LCIE | COLT | LIBEL CASE | MICASE | CSPAE |
| *Almighty* | 25 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| *Christ* | 102 | 28 | 16 | 16 | 0 |
| *Damn* | 22 | 80 | 10 | 29 | 2 |
| *Devil* | 14 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 1 |
| *God* | 785 | 918 | 102 | 251 | 11 |
| *Hell* | 63 | 232 | 36 | 34 | 7 |
| *Holy* | 17 | 14 | 4 | 15 | 1 |
| *Jesus* | 462 | 22 | 12 | 25 | 0 |
| *Lord* | 33 | 20 | 14 | 19 | 62 |
| *Sacred* | 5 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| Total | 1528 | 1322 | 204 | 397 | 85 |

Table 3. *Religious references in the Limerick Corpus of Irish English*.

| | LCIE | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Total occs. | Religious meaning/use | Non-religious meaning/use |
| *Almighty* | 25 | 0 | 25 |
| *Christ* | 102 | 0 | 102 |
| *Damn* | 22 | 0 | 22 |
| *Devil* | 14 | 0 | 14 |
| *God* | 785 | 112 | 673 |
| *Hell* | 63 | 7 | 56 |
| *Holy* | 17 | 6 | 11 |
| *Jesus* | 462 | 9 | 453 |
| *Lord* | 33 | 9 | 24 |
| *Sacred* | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| Total | 1528 | 146 | 1382 |

Table 4. *'God' and its associated clusters in Irish English.*

| Patterns to the left | Frequency | Patterns to the right | Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Ah God* | 8 | *God almighty* | 18 |
| *By God* | 16 | *God and* | 37 |
| *Dear God* | 7 | *God bless* | 7 |
| *My God* | 25 | *God but* | 11 |
| *Oh my God* | 243 | *God do/did* | 8 |
| *Now God* | 7 | *God for* | 9 |
| *Of God* | 7 | *God he* | 18 |
| *Oh God* | 50 | *God help* + personal pronoun | 20 |
| *Say/Said/saying God* | 6 | *God how* | 7 |
| *Thank God* | 34 | *God I* | 90 |
| *Thanks be to God* | 5 | *God imagine* | 7 |
| *Surely be to God* | 1 | | |
| *Honest to God* | 10 | *God is/isn't* | 10 |
| *Swear to God* | 33 | *God it* | 40 |
| *Yeah God* | 15 | *God like* | 6 |
| | | *God love* | 7 |
| | | *God no* | 21 |
| | | *God oh* | 24 |

| | |
|---|---|
| *God she* | 61 |
| *God so* | 10 |
| *God that* | 33 |
| *God the* | 13 |
| *God there* | 12 |
| *God they* | 15 |
| *God we* | 9 |
| *God what* | 21 |
| *God yeah* | 27 |
| *God you* | 27 |

Table 5. *'Jesus' and its associated clusters in Irish English.*

| Patterns to the left | Frequency | Patterns to the right | Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Ah Jesus* | 27 | *Jesus and* | 11 |
| *And Jesus* | 6 | *Jesus Christ* | 42 |
| *But Jesus* | 6 | *Jesus did/do* | 14 |
| *It Jesus* | 9 | *Jesus he* | 14 |
| *Like Jesus* | 16 | *Jesus I* | 66 |
| *Oh Jesus* | 82 | *Jesus if* | 6 |
| *Said/say/says Jesus* | 10 | *Jesus it* | 26 |
| *Yeah Jesus* | 22 | *Jesus lads* | 6 |
| | | *Jesus look* | 8 |
| | | *Jesus no* | 17 |
| | | *Jesus that* | 23 |
| | | *Jesus the* | 10 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | *Jesus there* | 9 |
| | *Jesus they* | 15 |
| | *Jesus we* | 8 |
| | *Jesus what* | 6 |
| | *Jesus yeah* | 18 |
| | *Jesus you* | 13 |

| N | Concordance | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | is. Think who is it about George. Oh | Jesus Christ | coughing mumbling Oh |
| 2 | for you? Will I pour it for you? Do yea. | Jesus Christ | I'll get fuck all done today |
| 3 | are you going? Don't fucking care | Jesus Christ | Betty, I'm looking at you |
| 4 | league game. I remember I was a sub. | Jesus Christ | how many have we had |
| 5 | like you get no respect around here like | Jesus Christ | everyone treats me like shit |
| 6 | eighty five was it? B's and C's anyway. | Jesus Christ | Patricia you'll have us in |
| 7 | used to tell us that you were thick and | Jesus Christ | you'd need another five |
| 8 | Yeah. +and the price of her tablets. | Jesus Christ. | she shocked me lik |
| 9 | sheet and all, put your hand down here | Jesus Christ | or all the nurses will be |
| 10 | Euros would be now? Aw in Euros, | Jesus Christ. | Ahh but it is not Euros |
| 11 | oh sugar. Yeah fucking wall anyways | Jesus Christ | did you count the wall? |
| 12 | then it goes up to eleven ninety one | Jesus Christ | that's aw=. Which is a |
| 13 | up there now? . Drive up there you see. | Jesus Christ | where are we Galway is. |
| 14 | them I want to get them back she's a. | Jesus Christ. | John if you're going will |
| 15 | for yourself? No that's for her. Oh | Jesus Christ | I was wondering. laughing |
| 16 | it was ok. I did it there one day and | Jesus Christ | there was a crop of hay in |
| 17 | but on the breathalyser you might fail it. | Jesus Christ | two pints is a waste of |
| 18 | here have ye? Moist? Yeah mice. Oh | Jesus Christ. | I didn't hear any anyway |
| 19 | Come on Roscommon You fecker ya, | Jesus Christ. | Calm down, or you'll be |
| 20 | this, the hen party or the stag party? | Jesus Christ. | They got busted. What |

Figure 1. *'Jesus Christ' sample concordance lines.*

Table 6. *Top 20 keywords in the female talk.*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. ***God*** | 6. *Suppose* | 11. ***Lord*** | 16. *So* |
| 2. *Fucking* | 7. ***God's*** | 12. ***Prayers*** | 17. *Wouldn't* |
| 3. *Like* | 8. *Fuck* | 13. *Just* | 18. *Won't* |
| 4. ***Jesus*** | 9. *Really* | 14. *Obviously* | 19. *I'll* |
| 5. *Everything* | 10. ***Saint*** | 15. *Actually* | 20. *They'll* |

Table 7. *Religious references across different age groups in female talk: Undifferentiated use.*

| | FAC 20s | FAC 40s | FAC 70s/80s |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Almighty* | 0 | 266 | 266 |
| *Christ* | 200 | 466 | 0 |
| *Damn* | 0 | 0 | 133 |
| *Devil* | 0 | 66 | 0 |
| *God* | 1933 | 2066 | 4000 |
| *Hell* | 0 | 66 | 66 |
| *Holy* | 0 | 0 | 400 |
| *Jesus* | 933 | 866 | 66 |
| *Lord* | 0 | 133 | 466 |
| *Sacred* | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 3066 | 3929 | 5397 |

Table 8. *Religious references across age groups in female talk: Differentiated use.*

| | Non-religious use | | | Religious use | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | FAC 20s | FAC 40s | FAC 70s/80s | FAC 20s | FAC 40s | FAC 70s/80s |
| *Almighty* | 0 | 266 | 266 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| *Christ* | 200 | 466 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| *Damn* | 0 | 0 | 133 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| *Devil* | 0 | 66 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| *God* | 1933 | 1733 | 2200 | 0 | 333 | 1800 |
| *Hell* | 0 | 66 | 66 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| *Holy* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 400 |
| *Jesus* | 933 | 866 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 66 |
| *Lord* | 0 | 133 | 466 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 3066 | 3596 | 3131 | 0 | 333 | 2266 |
| Total non-religious: 9793 | | | | Total Religious: 2599 | | |

Table 9. *Religious references across gender groups: differentiated use.*

| | FAC | MAC |
|---|---|---|
| *Almighty* | 532 | 1000 |
| *Christ* | 666 | 3199 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Damn* | 133 | 132 |
| *Devil* | 66 | 0 |
| *God* | 5866 | 4799 |
| *Hell* | 132 | 732 |
| *Holy* | 0 | 133 |
| *Jesus* | 1865 | 2599 |
| *Lord* | 599 | 398 |
| *Sacred* | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 9793 | 12992 |

Table 10. Non-R*eligious references across age and gender groups.*

| | FAC | | | MAC | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 20s | 40s | 70s/80s | 20s | 40s | 70s/80s |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Almighty* | 0 | 266 | 266 | 200 | 600 | 200 |
| *Christ* | 200 | 466 | 0 | 533 | 1733 | 933 |
| *Damn* | 0 | 0 | 133 | 66 | 66 | 0 |
| *Devil* | 0 | 66 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| *God* | 1933 | 1733 | 2200 | 1333 | 533 | 2933 |
| *Hell* | 0 | 66 | 66 | 466 | 133 | 133 |
| *Holy* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 133 | 0 | 0 |
| *Jesus* | 933 | 866 | 0 | 733 | 1266 | 600 |
| *Lord* | 0 | 133 | 466 | 66 | 66 | 266 |
| *Sacred* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 3066 | 3596 | 3131 | 3530 | 4397 | 5065 |
| Total FAC: 9793 | | | | Total MAC: 12992 | | |

Table 11. *'God' and its associated clusters in female talk.*

| FAC 20 | | FAC 40 | | FAC 70s/80s | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Oh my God* | 467 | *Oh my God* | 200 | *Praise be to God* | 67 |
| *Oh God* | 733 | *Oh God* | 267 | *Oh God* | 600 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *God* | 333 | *Oh God almighty* | 67 | *God almighty* | 267 |
| | | *Lord God* | 67 | *Lord God* | 133 |
| | | *For God's sake* | 333 | *For God's sake* | 200 |
| | | | | *Oh loving God* | 67 |
| | | | | *I declare to God* | 67 |
| | | | | *Mother of God* | 67 |
| | | | | *God above* | 67 |
| | | | | *Glory be to God* | 67 |

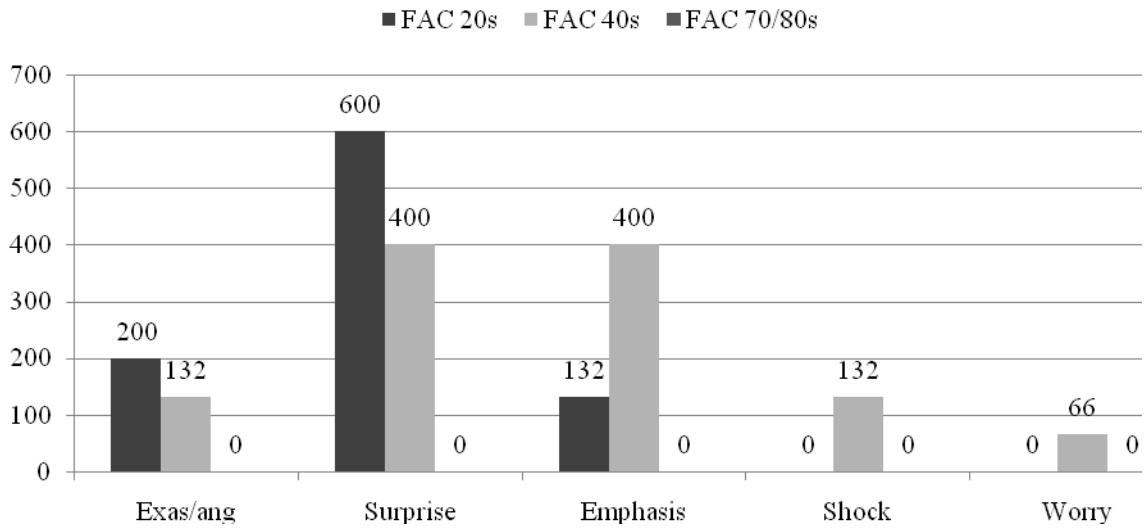


Figure 2. *Functional distribution of 'Jesus' across female talk.*

Table 12. *'Christ' and its associated clusters in male talk.*

| | MAC 20s | MAC 40s | MAC 70s/80s |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jesus Christ | 333 | 666 | 0 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Christ Almighty | 0 | 466 | 0 |
| By Christ | 0 | 66 | 266 |
| Christ sake | 66 | 0 | 0 |
| Oh Christ | 0 | 66 | 0 |
| Ah Christ | 0 | 0 | 66 |
| Jesus Christ Almighty | 0 | 66 | 0 |
| For Christ's sake | 66 | 0 | 0 |